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FM AMEMBASSY BISHKEK
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 1808
INFO RUCNCLS/ALL SOUTH AND CENTRAL ASIA COLLECTIVE
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RUEHBJ/AMEMBASSY BEIJING 2881
RUEHRL/AMEMBASSY BERLIN 0718
RUEHMD/AMEMBASSY MADRID 0101
RUEHFR/AMEMBASSY PARIS 0190
RHEFDIA/DIA WASHDC
RUEKJCS/OSD WASHDC
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC
RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHDC
RUEKJCS/JOINT STAFF WASHDC
RUEHGV/USMISSION GENEVA 1229
RUEHVEN/USMISSION USOSCE 3268
RUCNDT/USMISSION USUN NEW YORK 2654
RUEHNO/USMISSION USNATO BRUSSELS BE
RUEHBS/USEU BRUSSELS
RUEHLMC/MILLENNIUM CHALLENGE CORP
RUMICEA/USCENTCOM INTEL CEN MACDILL AFB FL

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 BISHKEK 000146

SIPDIS

DEPT FOR SCA/CEN

E.O. 12958: DECL: 02/19/2019

TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [MARR](#) [KG](#)

SUBJECT: AMBASSADOR URGES KYRGYZ NOT TO LIMIT THEIR -- AND
OUR -- OPTIONS ON MANAS

REF: A. BISHKEK 145

[1](#)B. BISHKEK 96

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Classified By: Ambassador Tatiana C. Gfoeller, Reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

[1](#)1. (C) Summary: In an urgent morning meeting February 19, the Ambassador forcefully told First Deputy Foreign Minister Kazakbekov that Kyrgyzstan should avoid any rash or irreversible steps regarding Manas Air Base. She urged that the Parliament delay its vote on the bill to nullify the 2001 Base agreement. Kazakbekov undertook to try to delay the vote, but was unsuccessful, as Parliament approved the law later in the day (Ref A). Following Parliament's vote, Ambassador spoke again to Kazakbekov, who said he had conveyed the USG message to the highest levels of the Kyrgyz government. He said FM Sarbayev and Presidential Chief of Staff Usenov would be discussing the way forward, and then be in touch with the Ambassador. He implied that future negotiations on keeping the Base open would be possible, and said they were waiting for a proposal from the USG. End Summary.

[1](#)2. (C) Ambassador met the morning of February 19 with First Deputy Foreign Minister Ruslan Kazakbekov to convey that the USG was studying the Kyrgyz proposal (Ref B) and considering its options regarding Manas Air Base. She said that the USG should reach a decision very soon, and she urged that the Kyrgyz Government not take any actions that would limit its -- and our -- political flexibility or options. The Ambassador stressed that the new Administration in Washington wanted to establish positive relations, but a rash movement on the part of the Kyrgyz could cause the atmosphere to deteriorate.

[1](#)3. (C) The Ambassador asked Kazakbekov if Parliament could delay consideration of the draft law to nullify the Base agreement. Kazakbekov noted that Parliament was scheduled to

discuss and vote on the law that afternoon, but said he would talk to Foreign Minister Sarbayev immediately to convey our message and try to delay the vote. (Note: FM Sarbayev was at the Parliament along with other new members of the Kyrgyz government for their swearing in ceremony that morning, attended by the President. End Note.)

¶4. (C) Ambassador asked Kazakbekov if he thought the Russians would make good on their offer of over \$2 billion in assistance. Kazakbekov laughed nervously, appeared thoroughly embarrassed, and admitted that money was indeed a factor in closing the Base. However, he stressed defensively that there were other, "more important" factors, and "Mr. Usenov has gone through these with you" previously. (See Ref B). Kazakbekov also noted that Usenov "had given you our proposal" on the Base, "which still stands," but the Kyrgyz were still waiting for a reply from the USG. Kazakbekov asked if the USG was planning to send a team to negotiate or would just present an offer through the Embassy. The Ambassador repeated that no decisions had been made.

¶5. (C) Kazakbekov was unable to delay the vote in Parliament, which approved the law to nullify the Base agreement by a vote of 78 to 2, with 1 abstention (Ref A). Following the vote, Ambassador spoke to Kazakbekov again, who sounded harried and contrite. He said he had made our request known to FM Sarbayev, but events at the Parliament were already in motion, and they were not able to stop the vote, though they had tried. Kazakbekov said that Sarbayev and Presidential Chief of Staff Usenov would discuss the way forward and then be in touch with the Ambassador.

¶6. (C) Comment: While Kazakbekov was unable to delay the

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vote in Parliament, he did indicate that Sarbayev and Usenov were still open to discussing options on Manas and were waiting for a proposal from the USG.
GFOELLER